



2013 BIG WEST TRACK & FIELD

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Five Schools Represented In Track and Field Awards

IRVINE, CALIF. -- The 2013 Big West Track and Field Awards were announced today as five different schools were represented.

The men's awards were divided among three institutions. Cal State Northridge junior Carl Horsley was named Track Athlete of the Year and Cal Poly senior John Prader was selected Field Athlete of the Year. Willie Alexander and Andy Sythe represented Long Beach State as the Freshman of the Year and Coach of the Year, respectively.

UC Davis took home two of the top women's awards as sophomore Ashley Marshall received Track Athlete of the Year recognition while mentor Drew Wartenburg collected Coach of the Year accolades. Samantha Balentine of Hawaii claimed Field Athlete of the Year accolades and Cal Poly's Laura Hollander was tabbed the Freshman of the Year.

Horsley had an impressive performance at the Big West Championship as he won the 100 and 200 meters, and participated on the gold medal 4x100 meter relay team. Horsley won the 100 in 10.46 and the 200 in 20.89. The relay squad finished half a second off the conference record with a victorious time of 40.00. All three times rank No. 1 in the Big West this year.

Prader nabbed the top men's field honor as the league's best pole vaulter. Prader, who broke a 16-year-old Cal Poly record with a clearance of 18-7 in a dual meet against UC Santa Barbara on April 27, returned to action at the conference meet to win for the second consecutive year. Prader successfully negotiated a height of 17-07.25 to exceed the mark of 17-06.50 that he won with in 2012. He owns the nation's No. 3 mark this season.

Alexander helped Long Beach State win the men's conference championship with outstanding performances in the long jump and triple jump. He finished third in the long jump (24-07.25) and second in the triple jump (52-02.75), both lifetime-best performances for the Fresno, Calif. native. He exceeded his previous bests by a landslide as 23-6 and 48-10 were his high water marks prior to the conference meet. Alexander's 52-02.75 also puts him a tie for 12th nationally in the triple jump, and ranks him third among freshmen.

Sythe won his fourth Men's Track and Field Coach of the Year honor (2006, 2008 and 2011) as he guided Long Beach State to its seventh conference championship and fourth in the last eight years. Willie Alexander was the fourth Big West Freshman of the Year award winner that he has coached in his 24th season at the helm of the program.

Marshall starred at the Big West meet as the second straight UC Davis Aggie to claim the women's top track honor. She won both the 100 meters and 200 meters, setting records in the process. Her 11.34 in the 100m broke the conference meet record of 11.36 established by Tamatha Jackson of Cal Poly in 1999. In addition, that mark tied the overall conference record initially set by Sonja Green of UNLV in 1987. Marshall also flirted with both the championship meet and conference records with her time of 23.25 in the 200m. Marshall's times currently rank No. 11 in the 100 and No. 15 in the 200 for the NCAA West Region.

Wartenburg steered UC Davis to its second straight Big West title as his troops won nine events at the conference meet with 172.5 points. In his fourth year overseeing the program, he has built a dominant sprinting and distance corps as an Aggie athlete was victorious in the steeplechase, 10,000 meters, 1500 meters, 100 meter hurdles, 100 meter dash, 200 meter dash, 800 meters and 4x400 meter relay. In addition, a UCD athlete won the pole vault for the second straight year.

Balentine, ranked No. 10 in the nation in the high jump, did not disappoint in Hawaii's first trip to the Big West Championship. Balentine cleared 5-10.75 to win by over three inches in Northridge last weekend, adding to her gold medal in the heptathlon as she accumulated 5,060 points. Balentine had a leap of 6-0.5 earlier this year at the Sacramento State Mondo Mid-Major Challenge.

The top freshman honor went to Cal Poly's Hollander, who broke the conference championship meet record in the 5,000 with a time of 16:25.62, finishing ahead of her next closest competition by 49 seconds. Earlier this year, she sported an NCAA West qualifying mark of 15:53.73 that at the time set the overall Big West record.

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